

Contact Person	Mark Murphy	Revision	3
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TRAVEL POLICY

This document describes the Ames Laboratory's policy for travel and travel cost reimbursement.

1.0 APPROVAL RECORD

- Reviewed by: Training & Documents, QA Coordinator (Molly Granseth)
- Reviewed by: Manager, Purchasing & Property Services (Andrea Spiker)
- Reviewed by: Manager, Accounting (John Clough)
- Approved by: Manager, Quality Assurance & ESH&A (Sean Whalen)
- Approved by: Chief Operations Officer (Mark Murphy)
- Approved by: General Counsel (Barbara Biederman)
- Approved by: Associate Director for Sponsored Research Administration (Deb Covey)
- Approved by: Assistant Director for Scientific Planning (Cynthia Jenks)
- Approved by: Chief Research Officer (Duane Johnson)
- Approved by: Deputy Director (Tom Lograsso)
- Approved by: Laboratory Director (Adam Schwartz)

The official approval record for this document is maintained by [Training & Documents](#).

2.0 REVISION/REVIEW INFORMATION

This document shall be reviewed by the Chief Operations Officer (COO) and revised, if necessary, every three years. The revision description for this document is available from and maintained by the author.

3.0 OBJECTIVE

Official travel undertaken on behalf of Ames Laboratory must be accomplished in a manner that meets mission/business needs, complies with the requirements in the contract, and minimizes cost to the government.

4.0 DEFINITIONS

Common Carrier: A business that transports people, goods, or services and offers its services to the general public under license or authority provided by a regulatory body. Types of common carrier transportation commonly used include airlines, trains, ships, buses and local transit systems.

Conference Management: The following three definitions (taken from the OMB Guidance on Conference Management) apply to the conference management process:

- **Conference:** A meeting, retreat, seminar, symposium, or event that involves attendee travel and is not exempt or excluded under section 9 of the [Conference Management Plan](#). The term "conference" also applies to training activities that are considered to be conferences under 5 CFR 410.404. Other common terms used include conventions, expositions, symposiums, seminars, workshops, or exhibitions. Conferences typically involve topical matters of interest to, and the participation of, multiple agencies and/or non-governmental participations. Indicia of a formal conference often include but are not limited to registration, registration fees, a published substantive agenda, and scheduled

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speakers, or discussion panels. Individual events may qualify as conferences without meeting all the indicia listed above, but will generally meet some of them. Please note some training events may qualify as conferences for the purposes of this guidance, particularly if they take place in a hotel or conference center.

- **Meeting:** Events necessary to carry out statutory oversight functions; to consider internal agency business held in a Federal facility; international cooperation engagements focused on diplomatic relations; advisory committee, review panels, evaluation panel/boards, program kick-off and review meetings.
- **Training:** Formal classroom training held at a Federal facility or required as part of a certification program for the performance of an employee's position.

Contract: Refers to agreement [DE-AC02-07CH11358](#) between the United States Department of Energy (DOE) and Iowa State University (ISU) for the operation of Ames Laboratory. The Ames Site Office (AMSO) is responsible for DOE's oversight of contract-related activities. The primary officials making up AMSO are the Site Office Manager and the Contracting Officer (CO).

Cost Accounting Standards (CAS): A set of standards designed to achieve uniformity and consistency in the measurement, assignment, and allocation of costs to government contracts (Reference 48 CFO 9903).

[Department of Energy Acquisition Regulations \(DEAR\):](#) The DEAR implements and supplements the FAR. It is not, by itself, a complete document and must be used in conjunction with the FAR (see Federal Acquisition Regulation below).

Departmental Manager (DM): Ames Laboratory operations managers. Use of the term Departmental Manager or DM includes designees assigned in accordance with delegation instructions found in the Ames Laboratory Accounts Authorization Handbook on the internal website.

Domestic Travel: Travel within the United States and its possessions.

Extended Assignments: Off-site assignments for employees that exceed 30 days. DOE limits reimbursement for lodging and meals for extended assignments.

Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR): Regulations followed by executive agencies in acquiring goods and services. These regulations may be included in federal contracts, such as the Ames Laboratory contract, thereby requiring the Laboratory to follow the regulations specifically listed in the contract.

Foreign Travel: Travel from the United States to a foreign country; from a foreign country to the United States; and between foreign countries. All foreign travel is entered into DOE's Foreign Travel Management System (FTMS) for DOE approval (Reference [Foreign Travel Order 551.1D Chg 2](#) and [Fly America Act – Clause I.86 – FAR 52.247-63](#); See also [Open Skies Treaties](#)).

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Forms: Authorizations for travel are documented using a paper [Travel Worksheet form](#) or the Expense Authorization (EA) form in Deltek Time and Expense. Expense claims are documented using a paper [Travel Expense Voucher form](#) or the Expense Report (ER) form in Deltek Time and Expense.

Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP): A set of principles promulgated by a body designated by the American Institute of CPAs that provide consistent interpretations and applications to accounting practices. Compliance with GAAP is a requirement in the Ames Laboratory contract. ([FASAB Handbook of Federal Accounting Standards and Other Pronouncements, as Amended](#))

Incidental Expenses:

- Fees and tips given to porters, baggage carriers, bellhops, hotel maids, stewards or stewardesses and others on ships, and hotel staff in foreign countries
- Transportation between places of lodging or business and places where meals are taken, if suitable meals cannot be obtained at the temporary duty (TDY) site
- Mailing cost associated with filing travel ERs and payment of government sponsored charge card billings

Local Travel: Travel that is within a distance of 150 miles from the Laboratory that will be completed within one calendar day and will not require lodging.

Lodging: Expenses for overnight sleeping facilities; does not include accommodations on airplanes, trains, buses, or ships, which are included in the cost of transportation.

Meals: Expenses for breakfast, lunch, dinner, and related tips and taxes; specifically excluded are alcoholic beverages and entertainment expenses and any expenses incurred for other persons.

Meals and incidental expenses (M&IE): The maximum daily M&IE amount allowed for travel of less than 30 days is established by federal CONUS (continental United States) rates. Separate rates are established for OCONUS (travel outside the continental United States) and foreign countries. See the [General Services Administration \(GSA\) Travel Management Policy Web page](#).

Open Skies Treaties: A set of agreements between the USA and foreign governments that allows the use of foreign carriers for U.S. Government-funded travel. These agreements qualify as an exception under the Fly America Act however treaties do not exist for each country. Care must be taken to make sure travel on a specific foreign carrier complies with the [Fly America Act](#) (Treaties available with European Union, Australia, Switzerland and Japan).

Official Travel: Travel under an official travel authorization from an employee's official station or other authorized point of departure to a temporary duty location and return from a temporary duty location, between two temporary duty locations, or relocation at the direction of the Laboratory.

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Per Diem: Combined daily expenses for lodging, meals, and incidentals (see [GSA per diem rates](#)).

Program Directors (PD): This policy uses the term Program Directors to refer to Division Directors, Institute Directors and Program Directors. Use of the term Program Directors or PD includes designees assigned in accordance with delegation instructions found in the Ames Laboratory Accounts Authorization Handbook on the internal website.

Transportation Expenses: Includes commercial carrier fares, car rental charges, private car mileage allowance, parking, bridge and road tolls, taxi and public transportation fares, and all other charges for transportation services necessary to accomplish the business purpose of the trip.

Travel Expenses: Ordinary and necessary expenses to accomplish the official business purpose of a trip (transportation, lodging, meals and miscellaneous travel expenses).

5.0 POLICY

It is the policy of the Laboratory that all official travel, including Strategic Partnership Projects (SPP) and royalty funded work performed under this contract, shall be properly authorized, reported, and reimbursed in accordance with this document. Laboratory travelers (staff, students, associates, invited travelers and contractors) are expected to exercise good judgment in the use of funds. Personal travel is not to be charged to, or temporarily funded by, the Laboratory. When an individual travels under the sponsorship of another organization, travel expenses may not be charged to a Laboratory account.

A cost is allowable under the contract only when the cost complies with all of the following requirements: (See [FAR 31.201](#))

1. Reasonable
2. Allocable
3. Meets standards promulgated by the CAS Board, and GAAP
4. Complies with the terms of the [contract](#)
5. Meets any applicable limitations set forth in the [FAR](#) or [DEAR](#)

One of the missions of the Laboratory is to train and educate the next generation of scientists. To fulfill this portion of the mission, the Laboratory has found it necessary to support the travel costs of teachers, post-docs and other short term staff members or associates as they travel to and from the Laboratory (temporary relocation). These costs are generally travel related, are limited to the staff person only (no family members), and do not include the moving of household goods. It may require support for a few days at the start of their stay in Ames while they find a place to live, not to exceed three days. These travel costs are included in this policy as reimbursable to an employee. They will be reported as a taxable reimbursement if appointment is less than 9 months.

6.0 AUTHORITY

Travel policy as stated in this document is set forth and implemented under the Laboratory Director's delegation of authority to the Operations division with signature authority to the Chief Operations Officer (COO) for policy development, exceptions and Travel Authorizations. The Manager of Accounting has signature authority for Expense Reports. Both the COO and the

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Manager of Accounting may delegate their signature authority in their absence.

7.0 SCOPE

This policy applies to all official Laboratory travel, regardless of funding source, and includes special rules for non-employees, such as invited guests, visiting researchers, and independent contractors. The terms set forth in this policy have been developed under consideration of the following sources in order of precedence:

- [FAR 31.205-46; Travel Costs](#)
- [DEAR 970.3102-05-46; Travel Costs](#)
- [Iowa State Travel Policy; Travel Costs](#)

By reference in the FAR and DEAR, this policy includes the following areas that are governed by Federal Travel Regulations (FTR): maximum per diem rates; definitions of lodging, meals, and incidental expenses; and the regulatory coverage addressing special or unusual situations. Also included are foreign travel policies governed by Department of Energy Order 551.1D Chg. 2 and Federal Code 49 U.S.C. 40118 (Fly America Act). As written, this policy does not address all the details covered in the FAR, DEAR and ISU Policy. This policy focuses on the common travel costs encountered by the majority of the Laboratory's travelers. From time to time questions may arise where the acceptable solution is found in the FAR, the DEAR or ISU Policy.

8.0 ORDER OF PRECEDENCE

Ceilings imposed for lodging and meals by FTR take precedence over all other travel policy documents. Similarly the policies and procedures mandated by the FAR, DEAR, DOE O 551.1D Chg. 2 and the Fly America Act take precedence over the ISU Travel Policy. Policy statements in this document that differ from the ISU Travel Policy take precedence over the ISU Travel Policy. In instances where this document is silent on a particular issue and not addressed in the FAR or DEAR, the ISU Travel Policy will be used to determine the appropriate treatment of the cost.

9.0 EXCEPTIONS

Under extenuating circumstances, the Laboratory Director or his/her designated approver may approve exceptions to this travel policy. The exception should be approved in advance, if possible, and must specify the circumstance or need, dates of travel, and the name of the individual to whom the exception is granted. When approved, the reimbursement is limited to the actual costs incurred and must be supported by receipts when required under Section 16.2 of this Policy. The Laboratory does not have the authority to approve exceptions to FTR, DOE Order 551.1D Chg. 2, or 49 U.S.C. 40118 (the Fly America Act).

10.0 PROCEDURE

10.1. Preapproval

All official Laboratory travel, including travel for employees, consultants, interviewees, invited guests, and individuals joining the staff, must have prior approval. If approval is not obtained before departure, travelers may be liable for the expenses incurred. To initiate approval, the traveler must complete and submit a Travel Worksheet or an

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electronic Expense Authorization to the Travel Office as far in advance as possible prior to the start of travel. The Travel Coordinator will prepare (or review) the appropriate authorization form (EA) to be routed for the necessary authorizing signatures. Individuals designated to approve travel may not approve their own travel.

Laboratory personnel holding concurrent Iowa State University academic appointments must comply with their academic department's policy regarding notification of their Ames Laboratory-related travel.

Certain expenses (e.g., car rental, special hotel and room accommodations, special events, stenographic services, health related meal exceptions, etc.) require additional justification and advance approval by the Program Directors or Department Managers (PD/DM) and/or COO and must be noted on the Travel Worksheet. An explanation of special need must be provided. Also, special requests for extended stays, reduced per diems and inclusion of vacation/personal time with the business travel must be preapproved.

If the city of business and the city of lodging are different, both cities must be listed on the Travel Worksheet in order to assure proper reimbursement to the traveler.

10.2. Domestic Travel Authorization

A Travel Expense Authorization (EA) must be processed for all official business travel taking place outside of the Ames area. The traveler signs the Travel Worksheet and submits it to the Travel Office. The Travel Coordinator prepares the EA from the information on the Travel Worksheet, signs it and routes the EA. The PD/DM and the COO shall approve the EA. The Travel Coordinator will authorize the issuance of airline tickets required for travel upon receipt of the Travel Worksheet for tickets purchased by the Laboratory.

10.3. Foreign Travel Authorization

All foreign travel requests, regardless of funding source, must have prior written approval by the COO or designee and be submitted to DOE for processing. If the foreign travel includes conference participation the traveler must have conference management approval before processing the foreign travel request. Once the foreign travel request is entered into FTMS DOE officials will have five (5) business days to reject the travel or ask further questions. Once COO approval is obtained and the five business days have lapsed, planning for the trip may commence and costs may be incurred. Even though the trip has been approved and expenses incurred no travel may take place without an approved Country Clearance from the State Department in the country of travel. If any of the following criteria are met a foreign travel authorization must be completed:

- Foreign travel expenses are paid with Ames Laboratory contract funds, including foreign travel paid on subcontracts, or
- Any portion of salary while on foreign travel is paid with contract funds, or

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- Foreign travel is funded by non-DOE sources for which the traveler represents the Laboratory or conducts business on behalf of the Laboratory. If neither of the first two bullets apply, discuss bullet three with your PD or DM to see if it applies.

Due to the nature of their work, persons holding the rank of Program Director or above are required to report their trip to Laboratory management even if the above conditions do not apply specifically to that trip. A no cost travel worksheet shall be completed and submitted to the Travel Office using the normal process. The Travel Office will create an EA and route it for approval. The no cost EA must provide the dates and destinations for the trip and include a statement that no contract funds will be used to support the trip; no contract-related business will be discussed; and no Ames Laboratory equipment (including laptop computers), or samples will be taken on the trip.

The foreign travel authorization request must be submitted to the foreign travel official point of contact (OPOC) in the Travel Office no later than 45 days prior to departure (50 days for travel to sensitive countries) for approval under DOE Order 551.1D Chg. 2.

In addition to the foreign travel authorization process described above, the Travel Worksheet must be completed and conference management approval must be obtained. The Travel Worksheet requests additional information not included in the DOE authorization.

Individuals who meet the criteria listed above agree to travel under the requirements of DOE O 551.1D Chg. 2. This includes the pre-approval process and the completion of a foreign travel trip report in the DOE prescribed format. Failure to adhere to these requirements will cause the individual's travel privileges to be suspended or revoked.

The Department of State requires that personnel embarking on foreign travel for 30 consecutive days or more must take the Serving Abroad for Families & Employees (S.A.F.E.) training. The S.A.F.E. training includes two courses, namely, "Security Overseas Seminar" and "Introduction to Working in an Embassy." S.A.F.E. training is available at no cost at https://ftms.doe.gov/SAFE_login.cfm.

The contract between ISU and DOE does not allow any expenditure to occur on foreign travel until the trip is approved. Any costs incurred prior to approval are the responsibility of the traveler and stand a possibility that they will not be reimbursed.

10.4. Vacation Time

10.4.1. Domestic travel

For domestic travel there are two main situations where vacation and travel are combined. The first is where both business and vacation are planned for the same destination and the Laboratory is asked by the traveler to pay the transportation costs to the destination city. The second is where the traveler travels to his/her vacation destination and then asks the Laboratory to pay for the transportation costs from the vacation site to the business site. In either case, an absence request must still be submitted and approved by the traveler's supervisor.

In the first situation, proposed vacation time to be combined with official travel must be

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included on the Travel Worksheet and on the Travel Expense Authorization form. In this situation the entire itinerary should be listed on the Travel Worksheet. Sufficient information must be included to make it clear that official business is the primary purpose of the trip. To emphasize this aspect, the total number of vacation days on a given trip cannot exceed the number of business workdays (for comparison purposes travel days are counted as workdays) on a trip. When figuring business versus vacation days, weekends and holidays are not counted as vacation days.

In the second situation a justification needs to be submitted to explain the need for interrupting the traveler's vacation and the need for the Laboratory to pay for transportation from the vacation site to the business site. In this case the length of the vacation is not a concern of the Laboratory but the PD/DM may decide to limit reimbursement for transportation expenses to the lesser of the actual cost of transportation or the estimated cost of transportation from Ames to the business city.

10.4.2. Foreign travel

For foreign travel, DOE O 551.1D Chg. 2 allows personal time subject to the Laboratory's leave policy. The Laboratory policy is that vacation days shall not exceed business days when the trip begins and ends in Ames (Des Moines area). Business includes travel days and work days. Personal time will include weekend days. If the traveler wants to combine travel and vacation where the vacation is greater than the business days the traveler may accomplish this by arranging for personal travel to and from the vacation location and including business travel to and from the vacation spot. In this case the vacation does not need to be included on the foreign travel authorization. If the traveler is paying for the transportation costs personally it would be best to show the business travel separately as starting and ending from the vacation spot. Please check with the Travel Office before purchasing foreign travel tickets.

10.5. Registration Fees

Receipts are required if registration fees are paid by the traveler. Official invitations, registration forms, schedules, etc., are required for Laboratory prepayment of these fees. Banquet fees are normally claimed under meals and are subject to the receipt rules for expenses greater than \$75 unless the banquet is included in and is not separable from the registration fee.

When meals are included in the cost of registration, an adjustment to the maximum meal reimbursement must be made. The traveler is requested to provide conference registration information with the Travel Worksheet in order to document meals provided in the registration costs. Only those pages that provide evidence of meals (or lack thereof) need to be provided. See Section 13.4 for more detail. If the information is not provided by the traveler the Travel Office or Accounting Office do the lookup and use the best information they can find.

Banquet/meeting fees, unless considered registration fees, will only be reimbursed up to the limits of the daily/individual meal allowance unless preapproved by the Director or COO and the Contracting Officer.

Registration fees for events in the environs of Ames should be submitted on a purchase

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requisition. No other general expenses will be reimbursed to Ames Laboratory employees for meetings in Ames.

Entertainment and alcohol are both unallowable expenses. If broken out separately, registration fees that represent payments to cover these types of expenses will not be paid or reimbursed by Ames Laboratory.

10.6. Combined Trips

Sometimes travelers combine trips for Ames Laboratory with travel on other grants (Ames Laboratory staff), travel for other customers (vendors), or travel to other institutions (research partners). Where trips are combined there needs to be a reasonable allocation of the travel costs between the funding sources. Since reasonable has no hard definition in allocating costs it is important that the responsible person from the program or department document their reasoning for the allocation of costs.

10.7. Extended Assignments

[Acquisition Letter No. AL 2013-1](#) provides guidance on DOE's policy governing reimbursement of costs associated with contractor domestic extended personnel assignments. Travelers may be reimbursed the lesser of temporary relocation costs or reduced per diem (extended travel duty). Relocation costs are covered in Part 18 of this policy.

When a reduced per diem method is utilized, the allowances are as follows; for the first 60 days and last 30 days of the assignment, Ames Laboratory will reimburse costs associated with **lodging** at the lesser of actual cost or 100% of the federal per diem rate at the assignment location. The intervening days will be reimbursed at the lesser of actual cost or 55% of federal per diem. For the first 30 days and last 30 days of the assignment, Ames Laboratory will reimburse costs associated with **meals and incidental expenses (M&IE)** at the lesser of actual cost or 100% of the federal per diem rate at the assignment location. Otherwise, the Laboratory will reimburse these costs at the lesser of actual cost or 55% of federal per diem. Ames Laboratory will not reimburse costs associated with salary premiums, per diem, or lodging/other subsidies for employees on domestic extended personnel assignments after three years (except for the reimbursements described above during the last 30 days of the assignment). The Laboratory will not reimburse any costs associated with per diem (lodging or meals and incidentals) unless the employee maintains a residence at the permanent duty station (most likely Ames area). See AL 2013-1 for complete details and exceptions.

The Office of Science further requires that all extended assignments (> 1 year) must be identified explicitly in Field Work Proposals (FWP). FWPs must include the following for each assignee: a justification for the assignment, the initial start date, a projected end date, the cumulative additional costs incurred due to the assignment up to that point in time, and an estimated cost to be incurred over the remainder of the assignment.

The traveler should contact the Accounting department to work out a schedule for reimbursement of costs.

NOTE: The Laboratory received guidance from our Contracting Officer that the

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extended assignment policy only applies to Laboratory employees. Subsistence payments for visiting scientists (non-paid) or workforce development participants like the SULI students are not covered by the extended assignment policy.

10.8. Conference Management

All travel, other than trips to perform experiments at research and user facilities, needs to be evaluated to see whether it falls under DOE's conference management instructions. Please see the [Conference Management Plan](#) for more information and to determine whether your trip is exempt from conference management. It is imperative that the traveler notify their program assistant or Travel Coordinator or the Laboratory Conference Management POC in the Purchasing Office as soon as possible. The DOE Conference Management process has lock dates after which no new attendees may be entered by the Laboratory staff.

Plans to host a conference must also be submitted to the Directors' Office and/or DOE for approval. Host justification forms may be obtained from the Conference Management POC. The Laboratory has developed a conference notification process and a process to estimate the number of attendees but it is still important for those planning to attend a conference or meeting to communicate this intent as soon as possible. No costs may be incurred until Conference Management approval is obtained. Also the Foreign Travel Authorization must have Conference Management approval before it can be approved.

11.0 PAYMENT OF TRAVEL EXPENSES

11.1 Direct Charges

Prepaid expenses for employee air tickets shall be charged directly to the Laboratory central billing account when issued by the Laboratory's travel office. Subject to certain conditions, the traveler is allowed to purchase, without special permission from the COO, on-line air tickets for a domestic trip in which personal time and business travel are not mixed. NOTE: When the traveler chooses to self-purchase a ticket s/he assumes a greater level of risk, so it is to the traveler's benefit to make sure the requirements for self-purchased tickets are understood and followed (see *Self-Purchased Tickets*, Section 12.1.1.). Special requests may be approved to prepay for air tickets for non-employees in cases of financial hardship or compliance with contract requirements (i.e., Fly America Act compliance).

11.2 Corporate Travel Cards

American Express corporate travel cards may be issued to permanent employees who travel on official Laboratory business at least once a year. Except in extenuating circumstances, corporate travel cards should be used only for expenses associated with official Laboratory travel. Amounts charged to the cards are billed directly to the cardholder. The cardholder is personally responsible for paying all charges and keeping the account current. The Laboratory will not reimburse or pay late fee charges incurred in connection with the corporate card. Travelers are reimbursed by submitting a travel Expense Report (ER). Contact the Ames Laboratory Purchasing Office Manager at 294-6738 to process an application.

Ames Laboratory p-cards issued to staff may not be used for travel expenses or

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registration fees. The Purchasing Office is authorized to pay for registrations via a p-card if necessary.

11.3 Advances

Generally, travel advances are not available for routine business travel within the United States or Canada. In those situations where the travel is for an extended period of time or involves unusual circumstances, a memo explaining the purpose and necessity of the advance and specifying the date when the advance is required must be prepared and presented to the COO for approval. An alternative to travel advances is the use of the American Express corporate travel card (see 11.2. above). Any charges to the card are strictly the responsibility of the cardholder.

A cash advance must be returned immediately if an authorized trip is canceled or indefinitely postponed. Also, the traveler's ER must be submitted within five days of the completion of the trip in order to close the advance. Any amounts owed to the Laboratory must also be paid within five days upon notification of the amount from the Accounting Office.

11.4 Payment of Expenses on Behalf of Others

Laboratory travelers normally shall not be reimbursed for expenses paid on behalf of other persons, except in the case of Ames Laboratory co-travelers who are sharing a room or taxi, etc. Entertainment of others is not allowed. Non-Laboratory co-travelers are expected to pay their own fair share of expenses.

11.5 Cancellation of Reservations

Travelers who are unable to honor a reservation will be responsible for canceling in compliance with the terms of the hotel, airline, etc. The traveler must return any refundable deposits or unused air tickets to the Laboratory, if the Laboratory pre-paid for them. Charges or lost refunds resulting from failure to cancel a reservation shall not be reimbursed unless the traveler can show that such failure was the result of circumstances beyond the traveler's control.

11.6 Miscellaneous Reimbursements

Some conferences or hosts offer to cover some or all of a traveler's expenses by either directly paying for certain expenses or providing the traveler a cash payment or a "travel award." If the traveler receives such support and the Laboratory has incurred travel expenses on his/her behalf, the traveler will need to work with the Accounting Office to determine which of the following settlement options is appropriate:

- The traveler may choose to reimburse the Lab for all the costs paid by the Lab for that trip. No extra documentation will be required with this option.
- If the Lab will not be reimbursed for its expenses the traveler may either submit a copy of the expense report provided to the third party payer or submit a statement certifying that the traveler did not charge the third party payer for any of the expenses incurred by the Lab.
- The traveler may choose to submit all expenses to the Laboratory on an expense report and report the cash reimbursement on the same form. The traveler will be

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required to submit all required original receipts. The traveler will be reimbursed for the net cost of the trip.

Note: A cash award for something other than travel reimbursement may be kept by the traveler.

Participation in an awards ceremony is allowed if the PD determines it is in the best interest of the Laboratory. If approved, the Laboratory will support travel costs but not extras like tuxedo rentals, photos, etc., which will be considered personal costs. Awards should be reported to the traveler's PD/DM.

12.0 TRANSPORTATION EXPENSES

12.1 General Rules

Travelers are expected to make every effort to obtain the most economical rates, use the most economical mode of transportation, and use the most usually traveled route consistent with the purpose of the trip.

12.1.1 Procuring Tickets

It is recommended that travelers use the Laboratory's contracted travel agency, Travel & Transport (515-292-8182) or T&T's online booking system, Concur, to secure their transportation tickets; travelers are required to use T&T/Concur in order to have their tickets charged to the Laboratory's direct billing account (travelers should contact the Travel Office [515-294-4488] for assistance in logging in to Concur for the first time).

Use of the contracted travel agency provides the following benefits:

- Management and accounting information is provided directly to the Laboratory without reporting by the traveler.
- Laboratory funds are utilized (rather than the traveler's) for the tickets reducing out-of-pocket costs for the traveler.
- Risk of incurring unallowable airline costs is reduced for the traveler.
- Additional flight insurance and lost baggage insurance are provided.
- Payment is deferred for approximately 30 days through the utilization of the Laboratory's Diners' Club credit card billing procedure.
- A toll-free telephone service (800-237-3950) is available 24-hours-a-day, seven-days-a-week to assist travelers in making schedule changes or resolving other travel-related problems.

Travelers should work with the travel agency to determine the best available ticket at the lowest costs. Efforts to deceive the airlines by purchasing tickets for itineraries that do not match the planned travel shall be avoided. When the traveler submits the Travel Worksheet to the Travel Office the Travel Coordinator will notify the travel agency and approve the purchase of the ticket.

All tickets for international travel need to be reviewed by the Travel Coordinator before they are purchased to make sure they comply with the Fly-American Act.

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Self-Purchased Tickets – Subject to the conditions listed below, travelers are allowed to order air tickets **(for a domestic trip in which personal time and business travel are not mixed)** through Internet sites by using either their personal credit card or the American Express corporate card (See Section 11.2). Although significant savings can sometimes be realized through Internet sites, travelers need to be aware of the site's policies regarding ticket exchanges, refunds and transfers before making a purchase. Travel advances will not be made to facilitate ticket purchases. Reimbursement must wait until the conclusion of the trip.

The lowest available fare is required by the contract. The following examples are provided as guidance for the traveler's benefit in documenting a purchase.

- a. If the cost of the ticket is \$500 or less the traveler only needs to provide a copy of the internet receipt that includes the itinerary and the price of the ticket.
- b. If greater than \$500, in addition to the ticket receipt, the traveler should provide documentation of available options. Examples include a quote from T&T showing the price for a similar ticket, or a list of the available flights from the internet site. If the internet site has tickets that cost less than the ticket purchased the traveler will need to justify the cost difference and seek approval of the excess cost in order to receive full reimbursement. Appropriate examples include times that interfere with the traveler's work responsibilities, layover intervals, flight duration compared to direct flights, etc. Preference for certain airlines is not an allowable justification.
- c. If the traveler uses the Internet to purchase tickets departing from Omaha, Kansas City or other nearby cities the entire cost of travel to these cities will be included in the cost comparison. The traveler will need to supply documentation for the cost of the ticket out of Des Moines along with the costs involved in travel to the other cities. The traveler does not have to seek preapproval if this option does not extend the number of calendar days of travel but the traveler's reimbursement will be limited to the lowest cost option. Contact the Travel Office for help in understanding the comparison process.

NOTE: There is an added risk to the traveler when s/he purchases their own ticket. For instance, if the traveler doesn't use the ticket s/he will not be reimbursed. If the traveler doesn't provide adequate documentation their reimbursement will be based on the documentation provided or, if necessary, documentation developed by Accounting after the fact. If there are any questions please contact the Travel Office.

12.1.2 *Indirect and Interrupted Itineraries*

Travelers are responsible for any additional expenses resulting from the use of an indirect route or stops along the way for personal reasons. Reimbursement is limited to the actual costs incurred or to the costs that would have been incurred using the normally traveled route, whichever is less. Any excess travel time will be charged to the appropriate type of leave. In the case where tickets are ordered using the Laboratory's Diner's Club card, the traveler must present a check payable to "Ames Laboratory" for the personal portion of the ticket prior to the Travel Office authorizing purchase of the ticket.

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12.1.3 *Use of Surface Transportation in Lieu of Air Travel*

A traveler may choose to use surface transportation for personal reasons even if air travel is the appropriate mode of transportation. In that case, reimbursement may not exceed the costs the Laboratory would have paid if air travel had been used. Reimbursement may include ground transportation by the most direct route plus in transit meals, lodging, tolls, ferries, and parking if the total does not exceed the cost of flying by commercial air.

For the purpose of computing flying costs the Laboratory will use the normal cost of ground transportation to and from airports, parking at the origin airport, contracted agency ticket fees, plus the cost of airfare purchased at least two weeks in advance using the lower of a) airfare for the normal business days or b) airfare for the extended number of days of the actual trip.

An exception to this policy is made for destinations that are within 10 hours (one day's travel with no en-route lodging). In such a case, surface transportation will be approved without the need for a cost comparison. This exception is made because of the extra time and inconvenience associated with traveling through airports and passing through security checkpoints. In addition, no exception request is needed when renting an ISU vehicle since the purchase requisition receives PD/DM approval.

The Laboratory does not expect a traveler to use a privately owned vehicle (POV) for surface transportation so the comparisons above will not involve POV mileage. However, if for personal reasons a traveler chooses to use a POV or rent a car personally, the cost of POV will be included in the comparison. This may or may not reduce the amount of reimbursement.

12.1.4 *Travel Extended to Save Costs*

Additional expenses associated with travel extended to save costs (e.g., extending the stay to obtain a lower airfare) may be reimbursed when the cost of airfare would be less than the cost of airfare had the traveler not extended the trip. Such expenses, which include lodging, car rental, parking, mileage and M&IE, shall not exceed the amount the Laboratory would have paid had the traveler not extended the trip. The stay must be in the same location as the business site or in close proximity to the destination airport to be reimbursed. If the stay is elsewhere, subsistence will not be reimbursed once the traveler leaves the business site, since it is assumed that this part of the trip is of a recreational or personal nature.

12.2 **Air Travel**

12.2.1 *Commercial Airlines*

Air travel to or from foreign destinations, including Canada and Mexico, must comply with the Fly America Act, unless the ticket is not ultimately paid through contract funds. Under the Fly America Act, only U.S. carriers shall be used for travel reimbursed from funds administered by Ames Laboratory. In situations where the U.S. carrier has worked out a code sharing arrangement with a foreign airline, the ticket must reference the U.S. carrier's flight number (**not** the foreign carrier's flight number) in order to qualify for

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reimbursement under the Fly America Act. In cases where a U.S. carrier is not available or the destination is subject to an Open Skies Treaty, a Foreign Air Carrier Justification form must be submitted and approved by the Travel Coordinator. Traveler must use International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) approved airlines when not using U.S. carriers.

Coach class shall be used in the interest of economy on all domestic or foreign flights. Except in extenuating circumstances, written authorization for reimbursement of airfare for business-class or first-class service must be obtained in advance from the Chief Operations Officer or designated approver. In any case, approval is required before a travel Expense Report (ER) can be processed for payment.

Business or first-class service may be authorized under the following circumstances:

- Business or first-class service is the only service offered between two points.
- No space is available in coach-class accommodations in time to accomplish the mission.
- Use of business or first-class service is necessary to accommodate a disability or other special need. The disability or special need must be substantiated in writing by a competent medical authority and be preapproved.
- Security purposes or exceptional circumstances, as determined by the Laboratory Director or designee, make the use of premium-class accommodations essential to the successful performance of the Laboratory's mission.
- Coach-class accommodations on an authorized/approved foreign air carrier do not provide adequate sanitation or health standards.
- The use results in an overall cost savings to the government, avoiding additional subsistence costs, overtime, or lost productive time while the traveler awaits coach-class accommodations.
- The accommodations are obtained as an upgrade through the redemption of frequent traveler benefits in accordance with travel policy.
- The origin and/or destination are outside the continental United States, and the scheduled flight time exceeds 14 hours, including layovers. In this instance, the traveler will not be eligible for a rest stop en-route or a rest period on arrival.

Baggage fees for the first checked bag are allowable. Travelers are encouraged to limit checked bags to one. Travelers must justify and obtain advance approval, if possible, from the COO for additional checked bags (see Section 14.0).

12.2.2 *Chartered Aircraft*

Charter aircraft service providers must first be approved by DOE in order to be considered for use. Actual expenses for chartering an aircraft are allowable, but prior approval to charter an aircraft must be obtained from the Laboratory Director and the Contracting Officer. Costs will normally be limited to commercial airfare unless an overall reduction in costs for the entire trip can be documented. Supporting receipts must be submitted with the travel ER.

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12.2.3 *Privately Owned/Rented Aircraft*

Privately owned or rented aircraft may be used on official business in view of the savings in fuel, time, and the elimination of overnight lodging. Reimbursement will be at the rate posted on the [GSA mileage reimbursement website](#).

As a minimum, the pilot must have minimum insurance, a private pilot's license, a current biannual flight review, and a current medical certificate. An instrument rating is preferred. Proof of these credentials must be on file in the Travel Office. If a flight is undertaken with only a visual rating and return is delayed due to weather which forbids VFR flight but would allow IFR, the delay will be charged as vacation and extra expenses will not be reimbursed.

Minimum insurance required:

\$100,000 bodily injury per person

\$1,000,000 property damage

Aircraft damage (if not-owned by traveler) of the amount of the value of the aircraft

12.3 **Automobile Travel**

When automobile travel is approved, reasonable charges for necessary parking, as well as charges for ferries, bridges, tunnels, or toll roads while on official travel or away from regular duties, may be claimed by the vehicle operator. In cases where more than one official traveler is going on the same trip, car-pooling is highly encouraged. Travelers may be asked for justifications if car-pooling is not utilized.

12.3.1 *Official University Vehicles*

University vehicles must be used in accordance with ISU policy. Instructions are placed in the vehicle for obtaining fuel, repairs or service if needed for the trip. In the event that no University vehicles are available, Laboratory staff should check with the Travel Office for the next best option. The Travel Office works with car rental agencies to get the best available cost with the least risk for the Laboratory.

12.3.2 *Privately Owned Vehicles*

Insurance

POVs, while in use on official Laboratory/University business, are not covered by the Laboratory or University. Therefore, it is required that staff members using their own vehicles on official Laboratory/University business carry their own auto liability insurance with minimum limits of at least that required by the state of Iowa. Reimbursement for the cost of repairs to a POV necessitated by an accident while operated on official business by a Laboratory employee is not allowed.

An employee who uses a POV for Laboratory business must certify minimum coverage exists on the Travel Worksheet.

Reimbursement

When two or more people travel together in the same POV, mileage is payable to only one traveler. Claims for reimbursement must indicate the origin and destination of the

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trip. Any substantial deviations (greater than 10%) from the distance shown in an Internet mapping service must be explained. Unusual situations may be documented and presented to the COO for review and approval.

Mileage reimbursement is intended to cover the cost of gasoline, maintenance and insurance. Mileage shall ordinarily be computed between the traveler's work station and the common carrier or destination. Expenses between the traveler's residence and workstation shall not be allowed. If the traveler's residence is closer to his/her common carrier or destination than the workstation, then mileage reimbursement will be calculated from the traveler's residence. When a traveler is authorized to drive a private vehicle to or from a common carrier terminal, mileage may be reimbursed as follows:

- One round trip, including parking for the duration of the trip; or
- Two round trips, including short-term parking expenses, when an employee is driven to a common carrier.

The standard mileage reimbursement between Ames Laboratory and the Des Moines airport is 42 miles each way. The standard mileage rate will be that approved by ISU.

12.3.3 *Rental Automobiles*

Rental automobiles may be used when renting in a specific situation is considered to be more advantageous to the Laboratory than the use of taxis or other means of transportation. The traveler is responsible for obtaining advance approval from the PD/DM for use of a compact sized automobile or equivalent costing vehicle per contract between the rental company and the Laboratory. Additional approvals are required from the COO when the use of a compact/economy or equivalent costing option is not adequate. In cases where the car rental agency under contract with the Laboratory or ISU does not have cars available the Travel Coordinator may approve use of another agency's vehicles. The traveler is also responsible for obtaining the best available rate that meets the requirements of the trip.

Travelers are expected to use rental agencies with which the Laboratory or Iowa State University has system-wide contracts that include insurance coverage. Charges for optional insurance, including collision damage waiver (CDW) and loss damage waiver (LDW) on rental cars in the continental United States, are not allowable and will not be reimbursed. The cost for collision damage waiver or theft insurance for rental cars used in Alaska, Hawaii, United States possessions, and foreign countries is allowable when it is necessary because of rental or leasing agency requirements, foreign statute, or legal procedures could cause extreme difficulty for an employee involved in an accident.

Other options:

	Domestic	Foreign
GPS	No	Yes
Roadside Assistance	No	No
Toll-pass	(Requires pre-approval by COO)	
XM radio	No	No

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Costs associated with damage to a rental automobile while on Laboratory business are reimbursable for the size car approved by the Laboratory provided the vehicle is operated legally and consistent with the terms of the rental agreement. If the traveler chooses a larger or more exotic vehicle the cost of damages will be prorated between the Laboratory and the traveler.

In cases where a traveler chooses to rent a vehicle larger than specified in paragraph 2 above for personal reasons the traveler will be required to obtain documentation of the following:

- Cost of the car being rented
- Cost of a compact/economy car (or equivalent) from the same vendor
- Cost of a compact/economy car (or equivalent) from a rental car agency under contract with the Laboratory, if different than the agency being used

Reimbursement will be limited to the least costly option of the three. Total cost of driving will be considered including extra mileage charges, drop charges, fueling charges, travel to and from the rental car business location, etc.

Whether driving a POV, rental car or University car the traveler should be aware that the driver of a vehicle, as well as the owner, may be liable for personal injury or property damage caused by an accident. Each traveler must have adequate personal insurance coverage.

The PD/DM may approve the use and added cost for the rental of a hybrid/electric or alternative fuel vehicle as long as the added costs appear reasonable. Use of hybrid/electric or alternative fuel vehicles supports the Laboratory's Site Sustainability Plan and Environmental Management goals.

12.4 Railroad or Bus Travel

Expenses for railroad or bus transportation may be reimbursed. If the destination is served by a regularly scheduled airline, an explanation of the need and circumstances must accompany the travel ER. This rule does not apply to intercity travel when total travel time is equivalent to that of air transportation. Reimbursement for the cost of Pullman roomette accommodations is allowed. If it is necessary to use accommodations that are more expensive than a roomette, an explanation of the circumstances must be included with the travel ER. Separate lodging expenses are not reimbursed for each night that Pullman accommodations are used.

12.5 Ship Travel

When travel by passenger ship is authorized, transportation at the lowest first-class rate is allowed. No additional subsistence reimbursement is made unless the fare does not include meals. If the ship is not the destination, additional travel time over the time it takes to fly will be charged as vacation.

12.6 Miscellaneous Other Transportation

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- Taxi fares, including reasonable and customary tips up to 20% of the fare are allowed when the use of public transportation or airport limousine service is impractical or not available. Cab tips should be included in the total fare amount claimed on your expense report.
- Actual bus, streetcar, or subway fares are reimbursable.
- Charges for the use of other types of conveyances (e.g., helicopter, boat) are allowed when their use is beneficial to the Laboratory. An explanation of the necessity for their use must be included with the travel authorization (EA) and preapproved by the COO.
- Courtesy transportation – the traveler will be reimbursed for reasonable tips (not to exceed \$5.00 without justification) when using courtesy transportation services.
- SPECIAL NOTE: The cost of taxi fares and other public transportation used to commute to a dining establishment are not reimbursable as transportation costs but may be included in the cost of a meal when eating accommodations are not present at lodging or work sites.

13.0 PER DIEM ALLOWANCE – LODGING, MEALS, AND INCIDENTAL REIMBURSEMENT

The per diem allowances as listed in the FTR (lodging plus M&IE) are generally used as the maximum allowable reimbursement for lodging, meals and incidentals. In general, for domestic travel, the Laboratory will reimburse the traveler for actual lodging and itemized meal and incidental expenses not to exceed the per diem allowances. These maxima are based on a calendar day. Reimbursement begins with departure from home or office and ends with arrival at home or office. Actual meal and incidental costs up to seventy-five percent of the applicable M&IE is reimbursed for the first and last day of travel. No reimbursement is made for M&IE expenses when a trip takes less than 12 hours. Reimbursement for travel that lasts more than 12 hours but less than 24 hours is limited to seventy-five percent of the M&IE rate published for the appropriate locality and is reported as a taxable reimbursement.

Reimbursement of M&IE expenses is adjusted when (see per diem adjustment for provided meals below):

- Meals are furnished as part of official Laboratory business function.
- Meals, including continental breakfasts, are included in registration fees.
- Expenses are contracted for and paid directly by the Laboratory.
- Meals are included in room packages.

Travelers lodging in noncommercial facilities, such as house trailers and field camping equipment, are reimbursed for actual expenses, up to the applicable lodging per diem rate.

Travelers lodging with friends or relatives may not be reimbursed for lodging. The cost of gifts or meals provided to hosts that provide lodging is the sole responsibility of the traveler.

Use of a daily meal per diem may be requested for foreign guests and visitors at the Laboratory on a long-term assignment.

13.1 Domestic Travel

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Expenses are reimbursed in accordance with the rates set by the GSA and published on GSA's Web Page under [Domestic Per Diem Rates](#). The Laboratory will reimburse actual expenses for both lodging and meals and incidentals not to exceed the rates listed on the Web site for the destination lodging city. The rates listed **DO NOT** include room taxes, i.e. taxes can be reimbursed in addition to the maximum rate allowable for lodging. Under special circumstances, reimbursement for actual lodging expenses up to 300% of the normal per diem rate may be authorized. These include use of a conference hotel or unusual activity in the business city making hotels offering government rates hard to find (in this latter situation, documentation must include three rate comparisons from hotels in the business area of stay) See the [Request For Exception Approval Form](#) for additional exceptions. Circumstances must be explained by the traveler and approved by the Travel Coordinator (conference site and lowest cost of three available rooms) or COO (other exceptions) prior to taking the trip. Itemized lodging receipts must be submitted for the applicable business location.

13.2 Long-Term Travel and Change-of-Station Expenses

Long-term travel (30 days or more) and change-of-station travel sometimes involve different reimbursement rates (i.e., reduced meals allowances) or additional allowances (i.e., moving expenses for household goods). Change-of-station situations greater than one year in length also have special tax implications. Please contact the Travel Office when planning long-term or change-of-station travel to discuss these differences.

13.3 Foreign Travel

Reimbursement is based on the [Foreign Per Diem rates](#) established by the Office of Allowances, under the Department of State, as maximum U.S. dollar rates for U.S. Government civilians traveling on official business in foreign areas. The rates on the Department of State web page are updated monthly. The lodging rates **DO** include room taxes. Lodging receipts are required. Under special circumstances, reimbursement for actual expenses up to 300% of the normal per diem rate may be authorized in advance. See the [Exception Approval Form](#) for exceptions. Circumstances must be explained on the ER, and receipts must be submitted for the applicable business location.

13.4 Per Diem Adjustments for Provided Meals

Federal Travel Regulations require that travelers' per diem allowances for meals must be reduced by the amount that would have been allowed for meals that are included in conference registrations paid by the government. In simple terms, this means that the government will not pay twice for the same meal: if a continental/breakfast, lunch or a dinner is provided as a benefit of registering for the conference, then the traveler cannot claim the corresponding part of the per diem. This also applies to meals provided by the government or a contractor even when no registration is paid. You can find the discussion on the required adjustment in [FTR's Chapter 301 – Temporary Duty Travel Allowances](#).

Scroll down to the following:

* * * * *

(Quoted from Federal Travel Regulation (FTR)

\$301-11.18 What M&IE rate will I receive if a meal(s) is furnished by the

government or is included in the registration fee?

(a) Except as provided in §301-11.17 or in paragraph (b) of this section, your M&IE allowance must be adjusted for meals furnished to the traveler by the government (including meals furnished under the authority of Chapter 304 of this Title) by deducting the appropriate amount shown in the chart in this section for travel within CONUS and the chart in Appendix B of this chapter for meal deductions for OCONUS and foreign travel. For meals provided on the day of departure and the last day of travel, you must deduct the entire allocated meal cost from the decreased M&IE rate (see [§301-11.101](#)) The total amount of deductions made will not cause the traveler to receive less than the amount allowed for incidental expenses. The following is an example of the deductions in the current FTR. When the FTR rates and deductions change this table will be superseded by the revised FTR rates and deductions.

Total M&IE	\$51	\$54	\$59	\$64	\$69	\$74
Continental Breakfast/Breakfast	11	12	13	15	16	17
Lunch	12	13	15	16	17	18
Dinner	23	24	26	28	31	34
Incidentals	5	5	5	5	5	5

(b) Your agency, at its discretion, may allow you to claim the full M&IE allowance if:

- (1) You are unable to consume the furnished meal(s) because of medical requirements or religious beliefs;
- (2) In accordance with administrative procedures prescribed by your agency, you requested specific approval to claim the full M&IE allowance prior to your travel;
- (3) In accordance with administrative procedures prescribed by your agency, you have made a reasonable effort to make alternative meal arrangements, but were unable to do so; and
- (4) You purchase substitute meals in order to satisfy your medical requirements or religious beliefs.

(c) In your agency's discretion, and in accordance with administrative procedures prescribed by your agency, you may also claim the full M&IE allowance if you were unable to take part in a government-furnished meal due to the conduct of official business.

(End of Quote)

* * * * *

The administrative procedures the Ames Laboratory will utilize are as follows:

- When registrations are a planned cost of a trip or when information is provided to the traveler where meals will be provided, documentation should be presented

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regarding the meals provided. This may include web pages, direct correspondence or other forms of notification or invitation to the conference.

- The adjustment for the daily meal maximum will be based on a reduction from the daily meal per diem limit, not the elimination of the meal cost claimed. For example, if per diem is \$51 and registration includes breakfast, the traveler will be limited to \$40 for meals. If the traveler submitted \$42 for itemized meals including a \$15 continental breakfast/breakfast, the traveler will be reimbursed \$40 (\$51 - \$11) rather than \$27 (\$42 - \$15).
- If the traveler has medical requirements or religious beliefs that preclude him/her from eating the provided meals the traveler should notify the COO *in advance*. Depending on the circumstances, further documentation may be requested. In some cases, if requested by the traveler, a blanket exception may be authorized to cover all travel for that individual for the entire fiscal year. It is recommended that the traveler contact the conference to see if alternate meals will be provided.
- In cases where the traveler is unable to take part in a government-furnished meal due to official business the traveler should provide sufficient documentation to determine the business nature of the event and document why they could not participate in the meal.

The government's position is that it will not pay for the same meal twice, so it is in the traveler's best interest to provide the most complete documentation possible to allow for the greatest level of reimbursement. Also, please note that the term "continental breakfast" is included as a meal that requires adjustment to the per diem. A rudimentary continental breakfast may include only coffee and pastries, but it still counts as a meal for the purposes of calculating the adjustments to per diem.

In the event that a traveler simply skips a meal and it does not show up on their reimbursement request, then the maximum meal reimbursement for that day will not be reduced. The traveler is still entitled to the per diem allowance for that meal because it is presumed to be put toward the cost of other meals during the same day. If the traveler fails to claim reimbursement for a meal, however, s/he must say whether it was skipped.

Meals provided by hotels as part of the room cost as part of the hotel's normal course of business can be ignored in regards to the above policy as long as the cost of the room is less than or equal to the per diem rate listed in the FTR. In cases where the room cost is more than the FTR limit and a provided meal is part of the justification for staying at the hotel the daily meal limit will be adjusted.

The Ames Laboratory meal policy requires the traveler to document costs of individual meals consumed, in addition to those provided as described above. Snacks should be included as meal costs with the closest allowable meal.

Blanket exemptions may be requested based on medical or religious reasons but won't relieve the traveler from checking with the conference for alternative option (# above). Submit requests to the COO for consideration.

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13.5 Additional Exceptions

The Contracting Officer has provided the following interpretations for the benefit of Laboratory travelers:

- In cases where a hotel charges different daily rates during a stay where some days are below the per diem maximum and others are above (but not above 300%), the Laboratory may reimburse the traveler by looking at the total cost of the trip rather than the cost for each day when comparing to the per diem ceiling. If the average of the total stay is below lodging per diem no exception request is required.
- In cases where a meeting charges a meal charge that exceeds the daily limit for that individual meal the Contracting Officer may be asked to consider allowing up to 150% of that particular meal per diem with the proper justification. Justification must include the activity that took place during the meal and the benefit to the mission of the trip to attend. These requests should be sent to the COO for processing.

In addition, the following policy exceptions are approved by the COO:

- Because of the way the FTR is organized it is sometimes difficult to find lodging in the destination city and an exception is needed to stay in a city that is not the destination city. As long as the cost of staying in an adjacent city is not greater than the destination city the Travel Coordinator may approve the exception request.
- Due to travel schedules it is sometimes necessary to stay next to the arrival or departure airport rather than the destination city. If, in the opinion of the Travel Coordinator this is a reasonable request, the Travel Coordinator may approve this exception request even if the per diem allowed for the airport city is greater than the destination city.
- Involuntary flight delays and re-routings that result in changed itineraries, added costs and occasionally added days will be supported by the Laboratory with no requirement to change the EA or get approvals from the PD/DM or COO. New locations associated with the itinerary change should be added to the ER. If associated with a conference, these involuntary costs should not be included in the costs on the conference cost sheet.

14.0 MISCELLANEOUS EXPENSES

Miscellaneous expenses that are ordinary and necessary to accomplish the official business purpose of the trip are reimbursable. Unusual claims for reimbursement must include an explanation from the traveler of the business reason for the expense. A receipt must also support any miscellaneous expense of \$75 or more. Types of miscellaneous expenses include:

- Business expenses such as word-processing services or rental of office machines in connection with the preparation of official reports or correspondence.
- Purchase of materials and supplies when normal purchasing procedures cannot be followed.

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- Local and long-distance phone or data line charges, including one brief safe-arrival call at each destination (limited to \$8 per safe-arrival call). The safe-arrival call must be made within the first two days of arrival at a destination to qualify. Business related phone expenses listed on motel bills may be claimed as a Miscellaneous Expense on the ER without further justification. Receipts are required.
- Cell phone roaming and other related charges - University policy requires the traveler to submit a copy of their cell phone invoice with the business-related calls and charges highlighted and justified.
- Rental of a room or other facility for the transaction of official business.
- Hotel taxes.
- Safe charges – list separate as miscellaneous expense and provide business purpose of the charge.
- Transportation taxes or fees not included in ticket cost.
- Baggage fees for the first checked bag. Travelers are encouraged to limit checked bags to one. Traveler must justify and obtain advance approval, if possible, from the COO for additional checked bags.
- Laundry expenses for domestic travel (business portion of trip) in excess of seven days.
- Registration fees for attending conferences, conventions, or meetings of professional societies (receipts required for any amount). Meal costs in excess of per diem cannot be reimbursed unless it is a special event, attendance is required (such as a banquet) or the Director determines that attendance at the event helps to support the mission of the Laboratory (requires Contracting Officer approval).
- Fees to connect to the Internet. Business-related internet charges listed on motel bills may be claimed as a miscellaneous expense on the ER without further justification. Travelers are encouraged to seek out hotels that provide free internet access or utilize free access provided at certain businesses. Internet connect fees on airplanes are allowable for business purposes.
- Special fees for foreign travel, including costs related to obtaining passports, visas, and required photographs; costs of certificates of birth, health, identity, and related affidavits; portion of charges for required inoculations not covered by employee's health insurance; currency conversion and check-cashing fees; and the cost of traveler's checks. Prior authorization is required before obtaining passports and visas at Laboratory expense. Passport reimbursement should be requested on a purchase requisition, not an ER.
- Shipping and handling: if you need to send items for a conference (booth materials) or research materials for an experiment you need to see the Shipping Office before you leave. They will discuss with you the return shipment and provide necessary paperwork in order that our discount will be applied to the return shipment. If don't anticipate shipping something back to the Lab but the need arises please call the Shipping Office first to get our contract number for the shipping company. If you pay for the shipping personally you will need to submit the receipt for reimbursement of any amount.

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15.0 INSURANCE

Many employees are routinely covered 24 hours a day, worldwide, against accidental death or dismemberment through ISU's life insurance benefit option. In addition, some credit cards provide additional life insurance. The Ames Laboratory Diner's Card provided limited life insurance for travelers whose tickets were purchased on the card. For insurance purposes, an official Laboratory business trip begins when the traveler leaves his or her residence or workplace, whichever occurs last, and ends when the traveler returns to his or her residence or workplace, whichever occurs first.

For self-purchased tickets the traveler should confirm insurance coverage if it is a concern. The Laboratory is not responsible for life insurance on self-purchased tickets.

Travelers who utilize personal vehicles are responsible for providing adequate insurance coverage before the trip commences. Cost of insurance is reimbursed in the mileage allowance discussed earlier in this document.

For foreign travel, the University purchased and makes available to Laboratory travelers a policy that covers health, transportation or repatriation costs for sick, injured or deceased travelers (CISI insurance). See the Travel Office for details and assistance setting up this coverage prior to submitting the [Request for Approval of Foreign Travel form](#).

16.0 TRAVEL EXPENSE VOUCHERS (DELTEK EXPENSE REPORTS [ER])

An ER is used to account for all travel advances and expenses in connection with an official Laboratory trip for both employees and non-employees. When properly completed and approved, this form is used to reimburse the employee for any amounts due. An ER must be submitted even if no reimbursement is due to the traveler, if travel advances or prepayments were obtained. Additional documentation will be prepared by the Accounting department to reimburse non-employee expenses.

All expenditures should be reported on one travel ER. Supplemental ERs may be submitted if necessary, but they must be clearly marked as such and must identify the original ER submitted in connection with the travel. The Travel website has a current electronic [Travel Expense Voucher form](#).

16.1 Information Required

- Dates and times of departure and return
- Any personal time must be indicated
- Explanations of any unusual items or items not clearly covered in the policy
- Meals included in registration fees or provided by the government must be indicated
- Itemized meal costs for domestic travel

16.2 Receipts

- Passenger receipts for self-purchased transportation tickets (receipt should include name of traveler, dates of travel, itinerary, flight numbers and total paid)

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- Receipts for local transportation costing \$75 or more
- Receipts for rental automobiles in any amount even if direct-billed.
- Self-purchased registration fees in any amount
- Itemized receipts for all lodging expenses for domestic or foreign travel in any amount
- Internet lodging receipts:
 - If the internet-booked lodging receipt has adequate information: traveler's name, location, dates, number of nights, base rate (fees and taxes as a separate item), no other odd things included, and shows the booking was completed and charged to credit card xxxxxx####, then no secondary proof of payment is required.

If there is anything unusual in appearance or it does not include the above information, the traveler will be asked for more documentation or a secondary proof of payment.

- If the base rate is obviously lower than the allowed FTR rate so that the rate plus taxes and fees on the internet-booked lodging is within the FTR rate for the location, then there is no need to look up a direct-booked hotel rate comparison. However, if the room rate plus taxes and fees exceeds the FTR room limit for the location the traveler will need to compare the hotel's rate plus taxes to show the internet fees did not cause the room to cost more than it would have if just direct-booking at the hotel.
- Non-refundable internet lodging reservations for a cancelled trip may be reimbursed if the cancellation was due to a weather-related or business-related reason and the PD/DM and the COO approve.
- Receipts for each miscellaneous expense of \$75 or more
- Receipts for extraordinary items such as repair of accidental rental car damage
- Receipts and bill of lading for items shipped from or to the Laboratory. This includes shipping charges for booth materials, pamphlets, flyers, etc.

Original receipts are preferred but electronic receipts are acceptable provided that the detail contained in an electronic receipt is equivalent to the level of detail contained in an original acceptable paper record. For example, an electronic receipt must show the name of the payee, the detail of the charges per day, the transaction date, and the form of payment.

16.3 Time Limit for Submission

Travelers must submit a travel ER upon completion of the trip. An ER becomes delinquent if not submitted within 30 days. If the travel advance exceeds the reimbursable expenses, the traveler shall submit a check for the excess, made payable

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to “Ames Laboratory,” within five days of being notified by an Accounting clerk of the amount owed. If the traveler fails to submit the ER to the Accounting Office within 90 calendar days or fails to make arrangements with the COO to extend the ER’s submission due date by the same due date, no reimbursement will be made to the traveler.

16.4 Unrecovered Travel Advances

Action is taken to recover unsubstantiated advances if the travel ER is not submitted within 60 days after the end of the trip. This action may be taken through the use of a collection agency or, when agreed to by the employee in writing, by deductions from wages or other amounts due the traveler.

16.5 Tax Considerations

Under IRS regulations, travel advances not substantiated or returned “within a reasonable period of time” are considered to be of personal economic benefit to the traveler and reportable to taxing authorities. For tax purposes, 120 days is considered “within a reasonable period of time.” If an employee does not substantiate expenses and return unused advances within the 120-day period, the Laboratory is obligated under IRS regulations to consider the advances as additional income and to withhold appropriate income and employment taxes. No refund of these taxes may be made, even if the amounts are returned or substantiated after the 120-day period.

16.6 Certification of Travel Expense

Each traveler submitting an ER must sign (employees sign electronically and non-employees sign by hand) a voucher certifying that the amounts claimed are (a) a true statement of the expenses incurred on official Laboratory business, (b) not claiming unallowable costs such as alcohol or entertainment, (c) not being reimbursed by another organization, and (d) have disclosed all provided meals.

16.7 Approval of Expense for Payment

The travel ER must be approved for payment by staff designated by the Laboratory Director or the Accounting Manager or designee. In order to ensure that travel is approved in an impartial manner, travelers may not approve the reimbursement of their own travel expenses. In addition, an employee shall not approve the travel expenses of an individual to whom he or she reports either directly or indirectly, with the exception of approval of the Laboratory Director’s and COO’s expenses by the Accounting Manager or designee. An employee also may not approve the travel of a near relative (spouse or equivalent, child, parent, etc.).

17.0 NON-LABORATORY PERSONNEL

Travel by non-Laboratory personnel must be approved in advance. When such travel is approved, these travelers are eligible for reimbursement of transportation, subsistence, and miscellaneous expenses in accordance with this policy. It is the responsibility of the host to inform the visitor of Ames Laboratory’s travel policies and to complete and submit the appropriate forms.

17.1 Interviewees

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The Laboratory Director or designated approver may authorize the reimbursement of travel expenses associated with interviewing prospective employees. Authorization must be obtained before any commitment for reimbursement of travel expenses is made to the prospective appointee.

Normal travel policies apply but transportation reimbursement is based on travel between the interviewee's current place of residence and the location where the interview is held

17.2 Invited Guests and Visiting Researchers

When invited to participate in Laboratory activities, guests or visiting researchers may be reimbursed for honoraria, transportation, lodging, and M&IE expenses while on official Ames Laboratory travel. Honoraria payments should be reserved for exceptionally accomplished visitors. The normal Ames Laboratory process is to reimburse for travel expenses only. Honoraria payments must be justified by the requestor and approved by the Laboratory Director or designee from the Executive Council.

All foreign national guests of the Laboratory must have a valid visa and I-94 form before any honoraria or reimbursement can be approved for payment. Honoraria and expense reimbursement payments will be governed by the checklist found on the second page of the Honoraria worksheet. Since allowable payments differ by visa type it is very important to provide the correct visa information on the initial request form.

Programs may request authorization for the direct billing of expenses to Ames Laboratory for authorized visitors staying in ISU housing or other local hotels that will direct bill the Laboratory. The programs shall make the reservation at these establishments and the Travel Coordinator will approve the direct billing to the Laboratory. This direct billing includes the cost of lodging only. The Laboratory will not pay for meals or any other charges by direct billing. Only hotels that charge the Laboratory the allowable FTR rate for Ames may be approved for direct billing services. The programs are also responsible to cancel the reservations and notify the Travel Office if the visitor's trip is cancelled.

17.3 Contractors

Contractors may be reimbursed for travel expenses when such reimbursement is so specified under the terms of their contract with the Laboratory. If the contractor representative is on long-term assignment (> 30 days), the Laboratory may choose to pay for the travel costs directly in accordance with this policy rather than reimbursing the contractor.

Contractors shall follow the [Travel Policy for Contractor Personnel](#) when travel is authorized on a subcontract.

17.4 Relocation Expenses for new hires

See Section 18.0 Relocation Expenses (below) for reimbursement for new hires.

17.5 Honorarium Form

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The [Request to Pay Honorarium or Expense Worksheet](#) is to be used for reimbursing non-Laboratory personnel for their travel expenses whether or not an honorarium payment is involved (an honorarium payment cannot be made to federal employees or M&O contractor employees). For guests receiving an honorarium payment in lieu of or in addition to expenses, the payee will be asked to complete a W-9 prior to processing the honorarium payment. For foreign guests, visa status and citizenship must be noted on the form and the payee will be asked to complete a W-9 or IRS form 8233, if applicable, prior to processing the honorarium payment. For travel reimbursement the guest will still need to complete and submit the ER. See the Travel Clerk for any additional documentation that may be needed.

18.0 RELOCATION EXPENSES

According to the FAR, relocation costs are costs incident to the permanent change of assigned work location (for a period of 12 months or more) of an existing employee or upon recruitment of a new employee. Reimbursement of relocation expenses for new researchers and staff members may be authorized to the extent that such funds are available, and when a PD/DM feels that this is necessary to attract specific personnel. The request must be approved in advance by the appropriate PD/DM. Relocation expenses are generally reserved for new staff at the level of faculty/researcher or in a comparable administrative or professional position. Eligibility is limited to persons expected to be employed on a continuing and permanent basis for a period of 12 months or more. A new employee will be considered for a household goods move if the move is at least 50 miles from the Lab.

Laboratory management recommends five percent (5%) of the first year's salary be used as a maximum dollar amount to be reimbursed for relocation expenses. If the 5% is not adequate, the PD/DM may authorize a higher allowance after discussions with the Human Resources Office and approval of the COO.

To qualify for reimbursement, relocation expenses must be incurred and submitted for reimbursement within 12 months from the start of work at the Laboratory. Should a new employee voluntarily leave the employ of the Laboratory within one year, s/he shall reimburse the Laboratory for relocation expenses received plus any related taxes.

Relocation expenses will be reimbursed for travel using the most direct route unless a longer route can be documented as costing less to accomplish. The number of days allowed for a move for reimbursement purposes is calculated as follows: number of miles between origin and Ames divided by 400 miles of personal vehicle travel per day rounded up to the next highest full day. This formula may be adjusted for reasonable situations, for instance, where a person's home is loaded out such that at the end of the day the person doesn't have a place to stay but still hasn't started travel. The same is true on arrival at Ames. Also, if weather interferes with maintaining 400 miles per day average the traveler may provide a justification for more days to the COO for consideration and approval.

A new employee will not be reimbursed for living expenses after arriving in Ames or vicinity with one exception. It may be negotiable that, in lieu of an earlier house-hunting trip, expenses for house-hunting purposes may be reimbursable for up to three days.

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New employees and staff that qualify for relocation expense reimbursement may utilize the ISU contract for van line services. Contact the Ames Laboratory Human Resources Office for more information. If the moving person chooses to hire his/her own van line services (including U-Pack), a quote from two van line providers is required and reimbursement will be based on the lowest cost quoted.

For individuals performing a self-move (U-Haul) or less than full service move (Pods), there will be a one-day unload period added to the end of the move, in calculating the allowable days for reimbursement. If the individual is allowed three days for a house-hunting trip in conjunction with the move, then a total of four days may be added.

ISU's policy on [Moving Expenses for New Employees](#) can be found in the ISU Policy Library.

19.0 HOUSE HUNTING EXPENSES

A new staff member may be reimbursed for one trip for the staff member and spouse for the purpose of arranging housing. The trip shall not exceed three days plus travel time for reimbursement purposes. The cost of the trip shall not be counted against the five percent limit for relocation expenses as stated above, but the travel will be subject to the Ames Laboratory Travel Policy and is considered a subset of relocation expenses and shall be reimbursed (plus applicable taxes) by the employee if s/he voluntarily leaves their employment at Ames Laboratory within one year.

When a new employee requests the house hunting option be added at the end of the move, the first night's lodging in the Ames area will be considered part of moving expenses and the house hunting will start the first full day in Ames. In this case the new staff member may request lodging for three additional nights and meal expenses for three full days up to the daily meal per diem limits. No partial day of meals will be reimbursed following the last night of lodging.

20.0 REFERENCES AND FORMS

[Request for Approval of Foreign Travel](#) (DOE F 551.1)

[Request for Exception Approval](#) (Form 48302.003)

[Request to Pay Honoraria or Expense Worksheet](#) (Form 48300.031)

[Travel Worksheet](#) (Form 58700.001)

[Travel Expense Voucher](#) (Form 48302.001)

[Travel Policy for Contractor Personnel](#) (Policy 48300.005)

[Moving Expenses for New Employees](#) (ISU Policy Library)

Additional travel information can be found on the [Travel](#) web page.

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